RAJAB: THE MONTH OF INNOVATION

Rajab (رجب) is the seventh month of the Islamic Calendar. The lexical definition of Rajaba is "to respect", of which Rajab is a derivative.

This month is regarded as one of the four sacred months in Islam in which battles are prohibited. But the enemy of Islam stop you from practicing your deen in this sacred month than you can fight.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

"Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months (in a year), so was it ordained by Allah on the Day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are Sacred, (i.e., the 1st, the 7th, the 11th and the 12th months of the Islamic calendar) …"
(Surah At Tawbah 9:36)

These months are calculated according to the movements of the moon, not the movements of the sun, as the kuffaar do.

The Sacred Months are mentioned by implication in the Qur'an, but their names are not given.

Their names are mentioned in the Sunnah:

Narrated by Abu Bakrah (رضي الله عنه) that,

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) *gave his Farewell Sermon and said:*

"Time has completed its cycle and is as it was on the Day when Allah created the heavens and the earth. The year is twelve months, of which four are sacred, three consecutive months – Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram – and the Rajab of Mudar which comes between Jumaada and Sha'baan."
(Bukharee 1741, in Kitab Al-Hajj, Al-Khutbah Ayaam Mina & Muslim 1679, in Kitab Al-Qisaamah, Baab Tahreem al-Dimaa')

RAJAB IS A SACRED MONTH

The Sacred months have a special status, which applies also to Rajab because it is one of these sacred months.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

"O you who believe! Violate not the sanctity of the Symbols of Allah, nor of the Sacred Month…"
(Surah Al-Mā'idah 5:2)

So, we should pay attention to the sanctity of these four months, because Allah has singled them out for a special status and has forbidden us to commit sins out of respect for their sanctity, for sins committed at this time are even worse, because of the sanctity of the time which Allah has made sacred.

FIGHTING DURING THE SACRED MONTHS

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

They ask you about the sacred month – about fighting therein. Say, "Fighting therein is great [sin]…"
(Surah Al-Baqarah 2:217)

The above does not apply to fighting in self-defence. If the enemy attacks the Muslim lands, it is obligatory for the inhabitants to defend themselves, whether that happens during a sacred month or not.

FASTING IN RAJAB

There is no authentic report from Qur'an or The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) or from the Sahaabah to indicate that there is any particular virtue in fasting during Rajab. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) used to forbid fasting in Rajab because it involved resemblance to the Jahiliya.

Narrated by Kharashah Ibn Al-Harr that,

"I saw Umar smacking the hands of those who fasted in Rajab until they reached out for food, and he was saying, this is a month which was venerated in the Jahiliya."
(Al-Irwaa' 957)

Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah (رحيم الله) said:

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) *did not fast for three consecutive months (i.e., Rajab, Sha'baan and Ramadan) as some people do, and he never fasted Rajab at all, nor did he encourage people to fast this month.*

Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (رحيم الله) said:

"No Saheeh hadith that may be used as evidence has been narrated concerning the virtues of the month of Rajab or fasting this month or fasting in any specific part of it, or observing Qiyaam al-Layl specifically during this month."
(Tabayyun al- 'Ajab bimaa wurida fi Fadl Rajab)

UMRAH IN RAJAB

There is no report to prove that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) performed Umrah in Rajab.

Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) *said:*

The Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه و سلم) ***never performed Umrah in Rajab."***
(Bukharee 1776 & Muslim 1255)

Ali Ibn Ibrahim al- 'Attar (d. 724 AH) said:

One of the things that I have heard about the people of Makkah is that they do 'Umrah frequently during Rajab. This is something for which I know of no basis, all I know is that it was reported in the hadith that The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) *said:*

"Umrah in Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj."

But if a person goes for 'Umrah during Rajab without believing that this has any particular virtue and because it is just a coincidence that it is easier for him to go at this time, then there is nothing wrong with that.

INNOVATIONS IN THE MONTH OF RAJAB

Innovation in religion is one of the serious matters which go against the Book of Allah and the Sunnah. The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) did not die until after the religion had been perfected.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

"...This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion..."
(Surah Al-Mā'idah 5:3)

Narrated by Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) that,

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) *said:*

"Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours which is not a part of it, will have it rejected."
(Bukharee & Muslim)

The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) *said:*

"Whoever does an action which is not a part of this matter of ours will have it rejected."
(Saheeh Muslim)

Some people have innovated a number of practices in Rajab, including the following:

- Salaat Umrah Durud halfway through Rajab.
- The du'a's which are recited specifically during Rajab are all fabrications and innovations.
- Visiting graves specifically in Rajab is bid'ah, because graves are to be visited at any time of the year.

▪ Salaat Al-Raghaa'ib: This prayer of the innovations (bid'ahs) that have been introduced in the month of Rajab. It is done on the night of the first Friday in Rajab, between Maghrib and 'Isha', and is preceded by fasting on the first Thursday of Rajab.

Al-Nawawi (رحيم الله) said:

The prayer which is known as salaat al-Raghaa'ib, which is twelve rak'ahs that are offered between Maghrib and 'Isha' on the night of the first Friday in Rajab, and praying one hundred rak'ahs on the night of Nusf Sha'baan (halfway through Sha'baan) are both reprehensible innovations.

No one should be deceived by the fact that they are mentioned in QOOT AL-QULOOB and IHYA' 'ULOOM AL-DEEN, or by the hadeeth which is quoted in these two books, because all of that is false.

No one should be deceived by some of those imams who were confused about the ruling on these prayers and wrote essays stating that they are mustahabb, for they are mistaken in that. Imam Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ismael al-Maqdisi (رحيم الله) wrote a valuable book showing that they are false, and he did well in that.
(Majmoo' Vol 3, Page 548)

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (رحيم الله) said:

As for innovating a prayer which is done regularly with a certain number of rak'ahs, with a certain recitation and at a certain time in congregation, like these prayers that are being asked about here – such as salaat al-Raghaa'ib on the first Friday of Rajab, and halfway through Sha'baan, and the night of the twenty-seventh of Rajab, and so on – these are not prescribed in Islam, according to the consensus of the imams of Islam, as was stated by the reliable scholars. No one established such a thing but those who are ignorant and innovators. Things like this open the door to changing the laws and rituals of Islam and becoming like those who instituted things which Allah has not ordained.
(Al-Fataawa al-Kubra, Vol 2, Page 239)

Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah (رحيم الله) said:

"Every hadith which mentions fasting in Rajab and praying during some of its nights is false and fabricated."
(Al-Manaar Al-Muneef, Page 96)

It was reported with an isnad that **IS NOT SAHEEH** from al-Qaasim Ibn Muhammad that the Prophet's Night Journey (al-Israa') took place on the twenty-seventh of Rajab. **THIS WAS DENIED BY IBRAAHEEM AL-HARBI AND OTHERS***.* The fact that there is no proof that the Israa' and Miraj happened on this date. Even if it were proven, that is no excuse for holding celebrations on this date, because nothing of the kind has been reported from The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) or from his companions (رضي الله عنه) or from any of the Salaf (early generations) of this Ummah. If it were a good thing, they would surely have done it before us.

Sayyid Saabiq (رحيم الله) said:

Fasting in Rajab is no better than fasting in any other month, except that it is one of the sacred months. There is no report in the Saheeh Sunnah to suggest that there is anything special about fasting in this month. Whatever has been narrated concerning that is not fit to be quoted as evidence.
(Fiqh al-Sunnah, Vol 1, Page 282)

One of the innovations that take place during this month is the recitation of the story of the Miraj, and celebrations to commemorate it on the twenty-seventh of Rajab, or singling out this night to perform extra acts of worship such as Qiyaam al-Layl or fasting during the day, or rejoicing and celebrating, mixing of men and women, singing and music, all of which are not permitted in Islam.